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COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Second session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 30th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 29 September 1991, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mrs. BADRAN

later: Mgr. BAMBAREN GASTELUMENDI

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Review of developments relevant to the work of the Committee

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The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

REVIEW OF DEVELOPMENTS RELEVANT TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE (agenda item 4)

1. Mrs. SANTOS PAIS (Rapporteur), reviewing some important measures relevant to the organization of work of the Committee that had been taken within the United Nations since the Committee's previous session said that two General Assembly resolutions concerned the Committee, namely resolution 46/112, on implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and resolution 46/111, on the effective implementation of international human rights instruments, including reporting obligations. In resolution 46/112 the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to ensure the provision of appropriate staff and facilities to the Committee so that the Committee's functions could be carried out effectively and it supported the organization of the Committee's future work on the basis of two sessions a year, each of two or three weeks' duration, and the establishment of a pre-sessional working group. In that resolution, the Secretary-General was invited to convene a brief meeting of the States parties to the Convention - a meeting that would take place in November - and was asked to give favourable consideration to the possibility of enabling a working group of the whole of the Committee to meet in 1992. That meeting might take place in December. In the same spirit, the Commission on Human Rights had adopted resolution 1992/75, in which it had supported the organization of the Committee's future work, recommended that the Committee should have the appropriate staff and facilities and recommended the adoption by the Economic and Social Council of a resolution along those lines.

2. On the subject of technical assistance and advisory services, the General Assembly had, in resolution 46/111, adopted a standpoint similar to that of the Committee in its recommendation on sources of information, and had stressed the importance of training activities. The Commission on Human Rights had, in resolution 1992/80, considered that the programme of advisory services should be continued in order to provide practical assistance in the implementation of international conventions on human rights to those States which indicated a need for such assistance. It had also requested the Secretary-General to give special attention to proposals of competent United Nations treaty bodies and invited those bodies, including the Committee on the Rights of Child, to make suggestions and proposals for the implementation of the programme of advisory services.

3. On the question of the computerization of the treaty bodies, the General Assembly had, in resolution 46/111, requested the Secretary-General to give high priority to establishing a computerized database to improve the operational efficiency of the treaty bodies. On the same lines, the Commission on Human Rights, in resolution 1992/15, requested the Secretary-General to give priority to implementing the recommendations of the Task Force on Computerization. It had also asked for a committee resource room to be established, as also recommended by the Committee, and had requested the Secretary-General to ensure that the recent periodic reports of States parties submitted to the treaty monitoring bodies and the relevant summary records should be made available in the United Nations information centres in the countries submitting those reports. In addition, it had reaffirmed the need to ensure the collection of reference material and the

dissemination of documentation on human rights, including audiovisual material. In that connection, she pointed out that no fact sheet had yet been issued on the work of the Committee, nor was it mentioned in the Manual on Human Rights Reporting.

4. As to the question of reservations to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, she drew attention to Commission on Human Rights resolution 1992/75 in which the Commission had appealed to States parties having made reservations to review the compatibility of those reservations with the provisions of article 51 of the Convention and other relevant rules of international law, to Commission resolution 1992/15, requesting that the question of the extent of reservations to human rights instruments should be included on the agenda of the meeting of chairpersons of human rights treaty bodies to take place in October, and lastly, to general recommendation No. 20 adopted by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, inviting the States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women to raise the question of the validity and legal effect of reservations to that Convention in the context of preparations for the World Conference on Human Rights in 1993. Moreover, the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities had decided to consult the Committee and the Commission on the Status of Women as to the desirability of requesting the International Court of Justice to give an advisory opinion on the validity and legal effect of reservations to the Convention.

5. With respect to the examination of States parties' reports by treaty bodies, an example was the action taken by the Human Rights Committee, which had recognized the need to improve its procedure and decided that its comments would all follow the same outline: a general introduction, a chapter on the positive aspects involved, a chapter on factors and difficulties impeding the implementation of the relevant Covenant, a chapter on the principal subjects of concern and, lastly, suggestions and recommendations. The Commission could also request States parties to provide additional information, a new report or a supplementary report. Moreover, at sessions of the General Assembly and the Human Rights Committee, several speakers had expressed the wish that the treaty bodies make their work better and more widely known. Some had also called for strong humanitarian action within the framework of existing human rights machinery, mentioning, inter alia, the possibility of treaty bodies sending a representative to States parties whenever a serious and urgent situation justified such a course.

6. With reference to the thematic issues of interest to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, it was difficult to draw up a complete list of all the United Nations documents in which the question of the rights of the child was raised, since different bodies considered problems affecting children in the light of their own area of competence. It was for the Committee on the Rights of the Child to determine the modalities of consideration and to find effective forms of action on the basis of the information available and the activities of other bodies. The bodies that had examined the rights of children included the Commission on Human Rights, which had held a special session in August to consider the human rights situation in the territory of the former Yugoslavia, which had ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child in January 1991. That situation involved, inter alia, the question of

enlisting children in armed conflicts. Children's rights had also been mentioned in connection with the environment and economic, social and cultural rights. In that connection, the latest report by Mr. Danilo Türk, the Sub-Commission's Special Rapporteur on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1992/16), merited consideration by the Committee on the Rights of the Child. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights had discussed the question of indicators at its most recent session. Following that discussion a seminar of experts was to take place in December at which it was hoped that the Committee on the Rights of the Child would be represented.

7. The Committee's three major fields of interest, which were also dealt with by several United Nations bodies, were the administration of justice, the sale of children and child prostitution and pornography, and armed conflicts. With respect to the administration of justice, the Committee had to take into account the Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances, adopted by the Commission on Human Rights, and measures taken by the Commission on Human Rights and the Sub-Commission, in particular on the administration of justice, torture, arbitrary detention, the independence of the judiciary and the right to a fair trial. The questions of the death penalty for persons under 18 years of age and of the human rights of detained juveniles were particularly important. The Sub-Commission had accepted the principle of a meeting of experts on the application of international standards concerning the human rights of detained juveniles, and had expressed the hope that the Committee on the Rights of the Child would be associated with it. She also drew attention to the general comments on articles 7 and 10 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights recently adopted by the Human Rights Committee.

8. The question of the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography had been widely debated within United Nations bodies and was at the centre of the discussion in the Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities. Positive steps in that area had been taken since the Committee's previous session. The mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the sale of children had been renewed for three years. Moreover, the Convention on the Rights of the Child had been recognized as an essential reference instrument because of the role that it could play in ensuring effective protection of the rights of children. It was therefore important that it should be widely ratified and implemented and hence public awareness of the question must be raised, in particular by disseminating information and by teaching about the rights of the child to all involved in actions concerning children, especially the judiciary and law enforcement officers, by establishing a national focal point to coordinate action on children's rights and by encouraging the establishment of governmental and non-governmental bodies and institutions acting on behalf of the child in the light of his or her best interests. In resolution 1992/74, the Commission on Human Rights had adopted a Programme of Action for the prevention of the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. The Commission had encouraged the Committee to consider the possibility of bearing the Programme of Action in mind when studying the reports submitted by States parties to the Convention and, in general, in all the activities it carried out in accordance with its mandate. Since the Programme of Action covered a very wide range of issues and was to be taken into account by all States, whether or not parties to the

Convention, it could play a role complementary to that of the Committee. In that connection, the Commission had decided to examine every two years the question of the implementation of the Programme of Action. Moreover, the Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery had recommended that the Committee on the Rights of the Child should give particular attention to the implementation of articles 32, 34 and 36 of the Convention when examining country reports. The Working Group had also reformulated the draft programme of action for the elimination of the exploitation of child labour, for consideration by the Commission on Human Rights at its next session. It had also suggested the establishment of an international child welfare fund to combat violations of the rights of the child.

9. Lastly, in connection with the question of children in armed conflicts, which would be examined by the Committee, the Special Rapporteur on the sale of children had said that child conscription was closely linked with the exploitation of child labour. He had pointed out that, in theory, the age of conscription ranged from 15 to 18, but in practice much younger children were recruited. The minimum age of 15 was in any case too low and should be raised to 18, in accordance with the definition of the child in the Convention. The Special Rapporteur considered that the military authorities and the various combatant groups should be encouraged not to recruit children as soldiers and to abide by the precepts of international humanitarian law. The Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery had expressed deep concern at the recruitment of children into governmental and non-governmental armed forces and at their participation in hostilities, and had decided to consider that question at its next session.

10. Having regard to the information received from various bodies, United Nations specialized agencies and intergovernmental organizations contained in the report on contemporary forms of slavery (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1992/35), she would emphasize the following recommendations: existing international instruments, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child, should be ratified, and existing standards should be applied. The Committee should question States parties about their military recruitment practices with regard to children under 18 years of age. States should, moreover, be encouraged to make declarations that they would not recruit children under the age of 18 into the armed forces. An optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child might be drafted, establishing that principle. Again, a high-level study should be undertaken on the recruitment of children into armed forces and their participation in armed conflicts. Lastly, her survey showed that there was, undeniably, an intense interest in children's issues, which pre-dated the adoption of the Convention but could now be developed within a comprehensive framework facilitating effective interaction between all those involved with the promotion and protection of the rights of the child. The Convention must contribute to harmonious development of children and ensure a multidisciplinary and complementary approach to implementing their rights.

11. Mr. HAMMARBERG said that, having regard to the importance of the Committee's unique task, it was essential, in order to carry it out, to give greater attention to the organization of work. The workload represented by the consideration of reports was a very heavy one and the Committee would be able to consider only 57 of them between now and October 1996. It would be at

least two years behind, even if extra resources were allotted to it to meet more often, for example, three weeks twice a year instead of two.

12. Mgr. BAMBAREN GASTELUMENDI expressed extreme concern at the very serious problems experienced by children throughout the world, in particular in Latin America, including armed conflicts, prostitution and the sale of children by terrorists. He suggested that measures should be taken to assist non-governmental organizations dealing with those questions.

The meeting was suspended at 11.20 a.m. and resumed at 11.50 a.m.

13. Mgr. BABMAREN GASTELUMENDI took the Chair.

14. Mrs. EUFEMIO referred to substantive provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and to organizational and other matters dealt with by the Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) which were directly relevant to the work of the Committee on the Rights of the Child. The constructive dialogue between CEDAW and the States parties that had submitted their initial or subsequent reports provided insights that might be useful to the Committee in monitoring the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

15. Article 4, paragraph 2, of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women aimed at protecting maternity. According to the chapter of the Manual on Human Rights Reporting that dealt with that Convention, it might be necessary to adopt measures which were discriminating in a positive way, in other words to ensure the protection and well-being of both mothers and children. That article was relevant to article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which stipulated, inter alia, that States parties should ensure appropriate pre-natal and post-natal health care for mothers and ensure that they were given information on child health and nutrition and the advantages of breast feeding.

16. Article 5 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women provided, inter alia, that appropriate measures should be taken to ensure that family education included a proper understanding of maternity as a social function and the recognition of the common responsibility of men and women in the upbringing and development of their children. The Manual on Human Rights Reporting stated in that connection that the consideration of reports had shown that stereotyped conceptions of women existed, caused by socio-cultural factors perpetuating discrimination based on sex and constituting obstacles for the implementation of article 5. That article could be compared to articles 3 and 18 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which stressed, inter alia, that parents had the primary responsibility for the upbringing of the child, whose best interest would be their basic concern. CEDAW and the Committee on the Rights of the Child should look into existing standards of behaviour between parents and children in order to improve their respective monitoring of the implementation of the Conventions. At its seventh session, CEDAW had recommended that States parties should make more use of temporary special measures, preferential treatment or quota systems to advance women's rights. The Committee on the Rights of the Child might also consider adopting a similar recommendation to advance children's rights to family care.

17. Article 6 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women sought to suppress all forms of traffic in women and the exploitation of prostitution of women, while article 34 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child sought to protect children from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. The Committee on the Rights of the Child might find it worthwhile to carry out research on the psychological and social factors of prostitution and on the social structure that encouraged and continued the trafficking in women and the exploitation of prostitution.

18. Article 9, paragraph 2 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women stipulated that "States parties shall grant women equal rights with men with respect to the nationality of their children". It could be compared to articles 7 and 8 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which dealt inter alia with the right of the child to acquire and keep a nationality. The reports submitted by States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women showed that implementation of the relevant provisions left much to be desired. It was therefore essential for the Committee on the Rights of the Child to be vigilant in monitoring the implementation of articles 7 and 8 of the Convention.

19. The right to education was recognized in articles 28 and 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and in article 10 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which stipulated that States parties must take all appropriate measures to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women: "(a) The same conditions for career and vocational guidance, for access to studies and for the achievement of diplomas in educational establishments of all categories", and "(f) ... the organization of programmes for girls and women who have left school prematurely". It was clear from country reports that most States parties provided free elementary education but very few offered free secondary schooling. Moreover, both boys and girls often dropped out of school after the age of 10 when they were needed for domestic tasks or income-generating activities.

20. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women encouraged the elimination of discrimination in employment and provided in article 11, paragraph 2 (c), that States parties should take all appropriate measures to "encourage the provision of the necessary supporting social services to enable parents to combine family obligations with work responsibilities and participation in public life, in particular through promoting the establishment and development of a network of child-care facilities", while respect for the right of children not to be neglected and to have the protection of the family was encouraged by the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Articles 20 and 24 of the latter prescribed the provision of alternative parental care for a child temporarily deprived of the family environment and recognized the child's right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health. Relevant standards should be worked out by specialists, and monitoring by the Committee should be guided accordingly.

21. The reports submitted by States parties to CEDAW showed that single mothers and women heads of family had difficulties in gaining access to

financial services such as loans and credits, notwithstanding article 13 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which specified that States parties should take all appropriate measures to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular: "(a) The right to family benefits; (b) The right to bank loans, mortgages and other forms of financial credit". In that area, article 27 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child provided that States parties should take appropriate measures to assist parents to secure "the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development".

22. Lastly, article 16, paragraph 1, of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which provided that States parties should take all appropriate measures to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women "... The same rights and responsibilities as parents, irrespective of their marital status, in matters relating to their children", with the interests of the children being paramount in all cases, met up with article 9 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which provided that "States parties shall respect the right of the child who is separated from one or both parents to maintain personal relations and direct contact with both parents ...".

23. The Committee might also adopt the same method of organizing its work as CEDAW and establish a pre-sessional working group to prepare questions on the periodic reports. The replies to those questions might be recorded article by article in the relevant sections of the Committee's report, thus facilitating the review and follow-up of unanswered questions.

24. It had been noted that, when the representatives of States parties were those personally involved in the implementation of the Convention, responses to specific questions were also specific and immediately available. The Committee might therefore ask the States parties to ensure that they sent representatives with full powers to speak and act on their behalf. It had also been noted that, when the reporting guidelines were not specific to each article, the substance of the States parties' reports left much to be desired and the experts had to ask more questions. In the light of its consideration of the first set of reports the Committee should therefore consider drafting comments specifying the information that it wished to obtain on each article of the Convention. It had been further noted that certain questions put by CEDAW to some States parties were not put to others. The Committee on the Rights of the Child should perhaps prepare a standard questionnaire, without ruling out the possibility of being able to put specific questions to some States.

25. The Committee should also consider how it might contribute to the International Year of the Family (1994), as CEDAW had done. In addition, CEDAW had realized the need to organize seminars in order to assist States parties in preparing their reports and, at the same time, to interpret the provisions of the relevant Convention and implement them. It might be possible for the Committee on the Rights of the Child to act in coordination with CEDAW, if not all the other treaty bodies interested in the organization

of such seminars. The Committee might also, like CEDAW, adopt a procedure to consider reports from States parties classed by level of development and region.

26. CEDAW had also noted that reservations by States parties were often made because the provisions in question were misinterpreted. The Committee would probably be faced with similar situations and might wish, when examining periodic reports, to consider the way in which those provisions of the Convention that were the subject of reservations had been interpreted. Lastly, like CEDAW, which took account of the work of the Commission on the Status of Women, the Committee on the Rights of the Child should take account in its work of the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children, and the corresponding Plan of Action.

27. Mrs. BELEMBAOGO pointed out that some forms of discrimination against women appeared in early childhood and that, in consequence, promoting children's rights through education would make future generations more aware of human rights in general and of equality between men and women. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women had close connections with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, but in difficult situations, such as when a choice had to be made between the life of a pregnant woman and that of a viable foetus, the two Conventions might conflict. The Committee on the Rights of the Child should give further attention to matters of that kind.

28. Mrs. SANTOS PAIS said that, although CEDAW's work and the work of the Committee on the Rights of the Child often converged, the latter went further in a number of cases. Moreover, in view of the information just given, it would indeed be useful to work in coordination with the other committees and to have access to the information provided to them by States parties. She agreed that it was necessary to know how States interpreted the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and also that it would be worthwhile to have a standard questionnaire for the Committee on the Rights of the Child, which would help Governments to improve the preparation of their replies and thus facilitate dialogue with the Committee.

29. Mr. KOLOSOV, reporting on the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, said it was the oldest human rights treaty body. It was responsible for monitoring implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, ratified by 132 States, and had already held 41 sessions. Since the Committee had to cancel several of its sessions for lack of financial resources, at its latest session, in August 1992, it had asked to be financed from the regular budget of the United Nations.

30. After examining the reports States parties were required to submit, the Committee adopted final comments, each generally of two or three paragraphs. Since many States did not submit their reports within the time-limits, it had decided to examine the situation in those countries on the basis of previous reports and the information available. As part of the second Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, the Committee had undertaken to draft model legislation against discrimination. To that end, it had set up a working group to draft legislation against racist propaganda

(art. 4 of the Convention). The Committee had also considered the possiblity of holding a third Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, since the second would come to an end in 1993. At its latest session the Committee had expressed particular concern at the situation in Rwanda and Burundi. It had examined the situation of former Yugoslavia and had addressed a letter to the Chairman of the Commission on Human Rights on emergency humanitarian intervention in that country.

31. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination had assigned some of its members the task of liaising with other treaty monitoring bodies and with the Council of Europe and the European Parliament. The Committee on the Rights of the Child should perhaps follow that example. It might also request one of its members to contact the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights set up within the framework of CSCE, whose headquarters was in Warsaw.

32. Article 1 of the Convention stated that "the term 'racial discrimination' shall mean any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life". Article 2, paragraph 2, of the Convention on the Rights of the Child echoed that article in providing that "States parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that the child is protected against all forms of discrimination or punishment on the basis of the status, activities, expressed opinions or beliefs of the child's parents, legal guardians, or family members".

33. Under article 7 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, States parties undertook "to adopt immediate and effective measures, particularly in the fields of teaching, education, culture and information, with a view to combating prejudices which lead to racial discrimination ...". In their reports States parties apparently did not always explain in detail how they implemented that article. The States parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child had agreed in article 29, paragraph (1) (b), that the education of the child should be directed to the "development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations". The Committee on the Rights of the Child must see to it that States parties implemented that provision.

34. Mrs. SANTOS PAIS said she supported Mr. Kolosov's proposal that the Committee on the Rights of the Child should appoint some of its members to liaise with bodies such as the Council of Europe and the European Parliament. The Committee should, moreover, look at the activities not only of United Nations bodies but also of those of regional bodies outside the United Nations system.

35. Mrs. BELEMBAOGO, reporting on the Committee against Torture, established to monitor the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, which had entered into force on 26 June 1987, said article 1 stated that the term "torture" meant any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, was

intentionally inflicted on a person. The States parties, which had risen from 48 to 61 between November 1989 and November 1991, were required under article 19, paragraph 1, of the Convention to submit to the Committee reports on the measures they had taken to give effect to their undertakings under the Convention within one year from its entry into force for the State party concerned. Thereafter the States parties submitted supplementary reports every four years on any new measures taken, and such other reports as the Committee might request.

36. The Committee against Torture worked in close collaboration with the Special Rapporteur on Torture of the Commission on Human Rights. The Special Rapporteur received information alleging torture and requested the States concerned to communicate to him their explanations and comments. When fears were expressed as to the possibility of persons in detention being subjected to torture, he sent urgent appeals to the States concerned, requesting them to respect the physical and psychological integrity of the persons detained. The Committee against Torture also cooperated closely with the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, which helped to carry out projects to provide direct assistance to victims of torture and their family members, particularly in the medical, psychological and social fields. It also took part in carrying out training programmes to acquaint professional health workers with techniques for treating the victims of torture. The Committee against Torture and the Fund's Board of Trustees had agreed to a regular exchange of opinions and information on questions of mutual interest and had also agreed to encourage Governments and non-governmental organizations to make financial contributions to the Fund in order to finance the numerous rehabilitation programmes for torture victims.

37. As to the Committee against Torture's methods of work, the reports of member States were always considered by a country rapporteur and an alternate appointed by the Committee. After consideration of a State party's report, the meeting was suspended briefly to give the rapporteur time to prepare the conclusions which he formulated on behalf of the Committee, but members could ask for the floor again if they so wished and request the rapporteur to give his conclusions at another meeting so that they could study the report further. The summary records of the Committee's meetings showed how important it was for the members of the delegations submitting their Government's reports to be able to reply to the questions put by the members of the Committee. The Committee on the Rights of the Child might be guided by the experience of the Committee against Torture when inviting States to submit their reports.

38. The Committee against Torture had deleted from the general guidelines on the form and content of initial reports to be submitted by States parties the requests for information of a general nature which were already in the unified guidelines regarding the first part of reports (cf. note verbale G 150 221-1 of 26 April 1991). States parties that experienced difficulties in drafting their reports could ask the Committee for assistance to be provided under the programme of advisory services and technical assistance of the Centre for Human Rights. Moreover, when a State party was three years behind in submitting its report, the Committee examined the implementation of the Convention in that State on the basis of the information it had available.

39. At its 80th meeting, on 25 April 1991, the Committee had decided in favour of a draft optional protocol to the Convention against Torture, providing for the establishment throughout the world of a system of visits to places of detention in order to prevent acts of torture. Lastly, two members of the Committee had been appointed to take part in the work of the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference on Human Rights. In that connection, the Committee had suggested that the World Conference should draw particular attention to the question of publicizing the activities of human rights treaty monitoring bodies.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.